

**Amendments to the Claims**

Please add new Claims 19 and 20. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

**Claim Listing**

1. (Original) A method for grooming network traffic in a digital cross connect, comprising:  
grooming inbound traffic at a first transport switch for at least one local switch;  
and grooming outbound traffic at a second transport switch for the at least one local switch.
2. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 wherein the grooming of inbound and outbound traffic is performed independently.
3. (Original) The method according to Claim 2 wherein the grooming of inbound and outbound traffic is performed free of tandem tying the first and second transport switches.
4. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 further including configuring the at least one local switch to operate with the first and second transport switches.
5. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 further including performing protocol switching at the at least one local switch.
6. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 further including performing grooming at at least a third transport switch.
7. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 wherein the first and second transport switches are at least one of the following:  
wideband crossconnect switches, narrowband crossconnect switches, or  
broadband crossconnect switches.

8. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 performed in a central office.
9. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 performed in an electrical, optical, or wireless network.
10. (Original) A system for grooming network traffic in a digital cross connect, comprising:  
a first transport switch that grooms inbound traffic for at least one local switch;  
and  
a second transport switch that grooms outbound traffic for the at least one local switch.
11. (Original) The system according to Claim 10 wherein the first transport switch and second transport switch operate substantially free of intermachine tandem ties.
12. (Original) The system according to Claim 10 wherein the local switch is configured to operate with the first and second transport switches.
13. (Original) The system according to Claim 10 wherein the local switch is a protocol switch.
14. (Original) The system according to Claim 10 further including a third transport switch that grooms other traffic.
15. (Original) The system according to Claim 10 wherein the transport switches are at least one of the following: a wideband crossconnect switch, narrowband crossconnect switch, or broadband crossconnect switch.
16. (Original) The system according to Claim 10 used in a central office.

17. (Original) The system according to Claim 10 used in an electrical, optical or wireless network.
18. (Original) A system for grooming network traffic in a digital cross connect, comprising:
  - means for grooming inbound traffic at a first transport switch for at least one local switch; and
  - means for grooming outbound traffic at a second transport switch for the at least one local switch, the first transport switch being distinct from the second transport switch.
19. (New) The method according to Claim 1 wherein grooming inbound traffic at the first transport switch includes separating higher speed traffic streams into lower speed traffic streams, and grooming outbound traffic at the second transport switch includes packing lower speed traffic streams into higher speed traffic streams.
20. (New) The system according to Claim 10 wherein the first transport switch separates higher speed traffic streams into lower speed traffic streams, and the second transport switch packs lower speed traffic streams into higher speed traffic streams.